

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WINNIP 00150 312105Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 EPA-04 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
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FM AMCONSUL WINNIPEG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2193
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS WINNIPEG 150

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, CA
SUBJ: POPLAR RIVER INQUIRY CONCLUDES

REF: WINNIPEG 145

1. FINAL TWO DAYS OF HEARINGS AT CORONACH WERE RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL. SEVERAL LOCAL GROUPS REPRESENTING LANDOWNERS, TOWNSPEOPLE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS RAISED QUALIFIED OBJECTIONS TO POPLAR RIVER NO. 2. IT APPEARS THIS OPPOSITION CAN BE OVERCOME BY PAYMENT OF HIGHER COMPENSATION FOR EXPROPRIATED FARMLAND, HIGHER TAX LEVIES AND GRANTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AND DECIDING ON A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL OF RECLAMATION FOR THE FARMLAND THAT IS TO BE MINED.

2. INQUIRY ALSO REVEALED THAT IMAGE WHICH SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORP HAS IN THE VICINITY OF CORONACH IS SORELY IN NEED OF PROPPING UP. BUT SPC WAS OUT IN FULL FORCE AT THE INQUIRY, AND APPEARED TO HAVE A GOOD START ON A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN TO ARIGHT THAT SITUATION.

3. ONE OF MOST COGENT BRIEFS IN FAVOR OF PROJECT WAS MADE BY INTERPROVINCIAL STEEL AND PIPE CORP (IPSCO) OF REGINA WHICH ALONE FORECAST AN ANNUAL REQUIREMENT FOR 150 MEGAWATTS (HALF OF

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UNIT 2 CAPACITY) BY END OF 1979, AND EVEN GREATER NEED IF IPSCO GETS A GOOD SHARE OF ALCAN PIPELINE BUSINESS.

4. BOARD OF INQUIRY MOVES TO NIPAWIN IN EARLY APRIL TO CONSIDER THIS HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO POPLAR NO. 2.

HOWEVER, SPC STRONGLY FAVORS POPLAR NO. 2. AND WITH SPC FIGURES

SHOWING NIPAWIN ABOUT 60 PER CENT MORE COSTLY THAN POPLAR NO. 2, USG OPPOSITION SEEMS TO BE ONLY THING THAT NIPAWIN HAS GOING FOR IT.

5. COMMENT: THE HEARINGS PRODUCED NO NEW OR STARTLING INFORMATION. THEY DID AFFORD A TIMELY OPPORTUNITY TO REINFORCE USG CONCERN. HOWEVER, BOARD OF INQUIRY SEEMED UNCERTAIN HOW TO ADDRESS INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ISSUE AND HAS HIT THE BALL BACK INTO EXTAFF'S COURT. FROM OUR SOUNDINGS, WE SAW NO EAGERNESS ON PART OF EXTAFF TO PRESSURE SASKATCHEWAN TO MODIFY UNIT NO. 2, NOR DID ANYONE FROM PROVINCE INDICATE THAT DELAY ON DECISION ON UNIT NO. 2, AS DEPARTMENT HAS REQUESTED, IS ACCEPTABLE.

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Message Attributes

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